

Wayne at Suffolk County Department of Labor Suffolk County Healthcare Occupational Opportunity for Learning (SCHOOL)

Wayne Martin was 23 years old when he first came to Suffolk Works Employment Program (SWEP), the local Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program in Suffolk County, New York. He had been working hard in a local pizzeria to provide for his wife and newborn child. Unfortunately, his life turned upside down when his wife became involved with drugs, abandoning her family and leaving him in sole custody of his son. Court dates and lack of child care caused him to lose his job and forced him to seek temporary assistance.

Wayne met with his SWEP assessment counselor, Larry Meneses, and together they developed an employability plan which addressed his barriers to employment and included a plan for vocational training. Thanks in large part to the Health Profession Opportunity Grants (HPOG) program, funded by the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Family Assistance, Wayne was able to enroll in a local Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) class which provided him a healthcare career pathway to regaining his self-sufficiency.

By the time he graduated, Wayne had removed several barriers and, with the help of SWEP-provided supportive services, had been able to obtain a car and get it insured. He confidently entered job search knowing he had the skills and ability to obtain and maintain employment.

Recently, Wayne called his counselor and reported that he had obtained full-time employment of 35 hours per week at a local skilled nursing facility, earning \$12.50 per hour. "I never could have done this without the help of my family and am very grateful to HPOG for making this success possible," he said.

Wayne has been encouraged to return to school and obtain additional skills in electrocardiogram (EKG) and phlebotomy. He will also begin exploring whether he is suitable for the Surgical Technician program beginning in September 2013.

**Elena at Suffolk County Department of Labor
Suffolk County Healthcare Occupational Opportunity for Learning (SCHOOL)**

Elena is a middle-aged woman who entered the social welfare system because her husband abandoned her and abducted her children to his home country of Turkey, forcing her to enter a shelter.

Fighting this illegal abduction and her new-found poverty, Elena was a determined client who was given the opportunity to enter the SCHOOL Project-funded Medical Office Administration program at Hunter Business School. She excelled in her studies and followed through on all her requirements. Elena also worked closely with her Suffolk Works Employment Program (SWEP) counselor to resolve other life issues, including childcare challenges when her children were returned.

Elena completed the vocational program in June 2011 and was selected to participate in the Health Careers Program, a subsidized employment program that gave TANF recipients the opportunity to work and gain experience in a Suffolk County Health Center. She was placed at the Amityville Health Center.

Although this was a temporary program lasting only 16 weeks, when her assignment was over, her health center supervisor referred her to Dominion Health Services, a health employment staffing firm that supplies staff to the health industry. By December, Elena was hired by Dominion and placed back at the Amityville Health Center where she is working 35 hours per week and earning a sustainable wage of \$14 per hour as a medical billing specialist.